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THE USE
of RELIGION

EDWARD M. CROSS



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The Use of Religion

Suggestions for Applying Christianity

Markin
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FOREWORD

This book is an endeavor to give practical help in the use of religion. The suggestions set forth have been successfully tried in many cases of actual need. Conscientiously used they have transforming power; for they are out of the heart of the Gospel.

Like everything worthy of attainment the rich promises of God cannot be had without effort. The rare privilege of communion with Him, with its attendant peace and power, is not for the careless and the indifferent. We must exchange a dissociated belief for a faithful practice of His all sufficient Presence.

The papers are not argumentative. There is no time for words. **Jesus Christ** is the final authority in the things of the spirit life. We accept His guidance, well knowing that if at first His words and ways pass our understanding we shall soon grow unto a knowledge of the Truth as it is in Him.

PREPARATION

It is suggested that the reader study and master the simple and necessary principles enumerated in the following paragraphs.

First—Relaxation.

Long experience shows that physical *relaxation* is a great aid to the reception of vital truths and influences. As long as the body is tense it seems that the mind and spirit attitude is aggressive and in a sense neutralizes the Divine before it comes into contact with the inner life. The Divine makes its habitation most naturally and easily in the mind and spirit where the state of *receptivity* is most nearly perfect.

Seek quiet and seclusion. In the morning before you arise; at night before you sleep; several times during the day. Recline on a couch or bed or in a comfortable chair.

Let go. Relax. Loose the hold of muscles and nerves. Think for a moment of something without bones or muscles—a jelly-fish, for instance. Raise your shoulders and let them drop freely. Lift your hands and let them fall as they will. So strive for perfect relaxation throughout your body.

Breathe deeply eight or ten times. And as you breathe, sense the inflowing of Divine peace and love.

There is no progress without relaxation.

Second—Concentration

Scattered thoughts and uncentered will dissipate power and close the avenues of approach to the soul.

Shut out the world. Think of one thing—the one all desirable thing for the present. One step at a time must be the rule of your growing life in God. And that one step must deal with the Great Underlying Principle not with the lesser and partial manifestations of it. Waste no time with details—they confuse the soul in its struggle for the Truth.

Determine.

Focus every faculty upon the possession of the one thing.

You are preparing to give truth an unimpeded entrance to your inner life. Stir in your heart a longing for God's presence and all that His presence means. Open wide the doors of your mind and soul for His blessing.

There is no progress without concentration.

Third—Contemplation.

Before you can *be* you must *see*.

Paint for your soul the picture of your desire. Visualize your ideal. God intended your imagination for use.

Time must be spent in the contemplation of the ideal you would have master your life and the truth you desire to become.

There is no progress without contemplation.

Fourth—Affirmation

If you are to succeed in your search for truth, serenity, and power, each step must be an affirmation. With respect to your faith in God and your communion with Him every doubt must be cast aside.

In your struggle for life-mastery there can be no negations. The words *if, maybe, perhaps, can't, but*, and the like, must be banished from your thought and language. The whole universe of truth is powerless to help you until you approach it with sympathy and intention.

Truth is affirmative, not negative.

There is no progress without affirmation.

Study the foregoing carefully. Read it over often. Make each step clear to your own mind. Add anything out of your own reading and experience as a re-enforcement.

At the close of each of the following chapters certain prayers are suggested with the hope that they may form a basis for those of your own composition. It is better to make and use your own. If it is difficult at first to form your petitions or to give full expression to your inmost thoughts, time and effort will overcome that limitation and bring a rich blessing.

Be as simple and natural as you can.

Let your soul speak to God.

*“God is love; and he that dwelleth in love
dwelleth in God and God in him.”*

I John IV, 16.

GOD

“He that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

Hebrews XI, 6.

(Read Psalm CXXIX; Romans VIII; I St. John III)

GOD IS. This is the great inescapable reality of life.

God is our Father. This is the great discovery of all the ages.

We are. This is the great Father-God-requiring fact of life.

O the wonder of life! That we are! That we are at all! That we exist, man and woman, parents and children! That we move about through the duties and relationships of life! That we are conscious of our own unique entity! That we can think—and that among our thoughts can come the thought of God! That we can form and speak the word! Here are the transcendent evidences of the Infinite and of the Eternal!

With what lowliness and humility, yet with what exaltation, do we come to the knowledge that in God we live and move and have our being! With what searchings of heart and soul do we at last discover that we are the expression of God, as He extends through us the Life and Love and Power that He is!

And with what horror must we learn that there is lodged with us the power to dissociate from its source the part of the Divine that each one of us is and to use it to thwart the purpose and to hurt the perfect expression of the life and love of God!

There can be no perfect life, there can be no serenity or power, or self-mastery without the association of that which is of God with that which He is.

So we unite ourselves with the source of our life. We live and move and have our being in the love and power and thought that are the universal manifestation of the presence of God. We draw nigh to Him and He to us until, without the slightest loss of our own identity, our wills yield to His will, our beings are bathed in His all-pervading presence and we become one with Him.

So God ceases to be a distant one in whom we believe and becomes for us the life we live.

Follow carefully the suggestions made under *Relaxation* and *Concentration* in the chapter on "Preparation." Then

Contemplate

Undertake to sense the presence of God. Use the faculty of intuition that He has given for this purpose. Lift your soul above the tawdry and the petty and the ignoble in life and attune it to the Infinite. Feel the being of God entering your life and occupying your body, which is His temple.

Know God as your mind when you think and will and experience any worthy emotion; think of Him as your power when you use your muscles; think of Him as your physical life in all its activities. Think of God as all that is worthy in you overcoming the unworthy; as always present and understanding and helping unto certain victory in every conflict of life. Then

Affirm

God is my life and the soul of all my being.

In Him my strength is as the strength of many.

I no longer merely believe in God; I live Him.

I give Him to men each hour of my walking with them and without ostentation. I lend fresh courage in the hard places of life and lift the burdens of world-weariness.

O God, my heart is full of thankfulness and praise because Thou art and of gratitude for that Thou hast endowed me with power to know Thee and with such a consciousness of my own identity that I can have the joy of bringing myself into relationship with Thee.

Dear Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast taught me of my divine childhood and that Thou hast come to make Thine abode in Thy temple.

So, use me, dear Lord, and let my life be the avenue through which Thou revealest Thy love and power to my fellow men. Amen. Amen.

*“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today,
and forever.”*

Hebrews XIII, 8.

CHRIST

"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but through me." St. John XIV, 6.

(Read St. John I and Romans V)

WE HAVE said in the foregoing chapter that the great discovery of all time is that of the Fatherhood of God. Because this is so we must now give our thought to Him through whom the revelation of God's Fatherhood came and by whom the discovery was made possible.

Not in any spirit of uncertainty, yet with all reverent hesitancy, do we approach Christ. We strive to know Him and to understand how best to relate our lives to His life. We endeavor through hearts and minds rightly directed, to enter sympathetically into the spirit of His thought and life,—to have His mind in all things.

The worst His enemies have ever said of Christ is that He is the best man that ever lived. The just and true estimate of His life and person is to be found far in advance of this. The uniqueness of His personality, the sinlessness of His life, the permanency of His teaching, His perfect two-fold revelation of God's Fatherhood and of the character possibilities of humanity; all place Him as the leader and final authority of that new order of mankind whose work it is to establish the Kingdom of God on Earth.

The world can accept no half-revelation of the Father and the Father's will and purpose in life. Christ's word, because of the immeasurable spiritual and character superiority of His life and therefore of His perfect discernment of the truth, is final. We may listen to none who, with the presumption of faulty character and imperfect spirit, would distort His word and subordinate His authority to anyone or anything whatsoever.

Christ Is Christianity.

Christianity is not a philosophy, though it is the essence of true thinking. It is not a system of morality, though it is the acme of right living. But as is true of no other effort to express religion it sums itself up in a person and in acceptance of and loyalty to that person as

The Saviour of our lives **from** sin and the Lord of our lives **for** service.

I

Christ is The Saviour of My Life From Sin.

The need of a Saviour from sin, from bondage to it and the effects of it, is universal. **So Christ taught and for this He lived.** Sin will never be vanquished by a denial of its existence or by a refusal to recognize it in our own lives. For, even though we have found well sounding words with which to excuse it, or have blinded ourselves, through egotism and falsehood, to its presence within us, it none the less destroys our souls and separates us from God.

Then, **realize** Christ as your Saviour.

Follow carefully the instructions for *relaxation* and *concentration* in the first chapter.

Contemplate

Think of Christ and His life work of redemption; of His forgiving those who came to Him seeking forgiveness; of His frequent attributing of sickness and impotency and soul atrophy to sin, and of His willingness and power to release all from bondage to it.

Picture Christ on Calvary, suffering for our sins, redeeming us by His pains, His arms stretched out in all-including invitation and infinite love. Then

Affirm

Christ is the Saviour of my life from Sin.

His love constrains me and makes me despise the wrong and desire the right. Through the power of His righteousness and of His strength I am free from the bondage to sin and am obedient to the law of His love and holiness.

So am I crucified with Christ in His death and born to a new life of righteousness through His resurrection. I am no longer petty. Hatred and jealousy have gone from my soul. I think no evil. My mind is pure and I radiate strength because I have brought my body into subjection and am one with the spirit and purpose of Christ.

II

Christ Is The Lord of My Life For Service

Service is belief in action.

It is the kingdom of God extending.

It is the saved soul seeking outlet for the spirit of Christ.

There is no salvation without service.

Service saves. It directs energies and talents into wholesome ways and sanctifies them through contact with the work of the Kingdom of God.

Follow carefully the instructions for *relaxation* and *concentration* in the first chapter.

Contemplate

Think of Jesus as He lived His life of service; as He went about doing good.

Listen as He says:

“I am come not to be ministered unto but to minister.”

“I am come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.”

Picture Jesus as He healed the sick, comforted the sorrowing, fed the hungry, and brought new hope into the world of darkness and despair. Then

Affirm

I am the servant of the Lord.

He is the master of my life.

To Him I yield my heart's devotion and
the worship of my soul.

I labour in His name and for His sake and
withhold nothing from His service!

Dear Lord Jesus, Saviour of the world and Redeemer of my soul, I come to Thee and beseech Thy forgiveness of my every sin and ask Thy saving grace that my every power may be sanctified and made whole for Thy use. Grant that no thought or word or deed of mine may hurt Thy kingdom's life and growth and that every opportunity to do good may find me fit for service to my fellow men. Give unto me the boon of a great soul that no little thing disturb me and of clear sight that no darkness be absolute. Let me glorify Thy name by all I am and do and come at last into Thine own presence with my hands clean and my heart unafraid. So grant my prayer and forgive its imperfections, for Thine own dear sake, My Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen.

*“God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but
of power and of love and of a sound mind.”*

II Timothy I; 7 .

POWER

"Ye shall receive power when that the Holy Spirit is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me to the uttermost parts of the Earth."

Acts I, 8.

(Read Acts II; Ephesians III; VI)

MEDIOCRITY and inefficiency are the product of sin and ignorance.

Impotency of life is inexcusable.

The average individual is an example of a perfect machine with no capacity to generate its own power and without connection with a power-generating center. We are as locomotives without fire or steam and with the ability to do nothing but stand still or run down hill. We are as arid plains and without the intelligence or the inclination to draw from the earth or to bring down from the mountain tops the water by which our own latent possibilities may be developed and brought to fruitage.

We are living lives separated from the source of life; trying to be energetic without the possession of the true power; and endeavoring to manifest goodness apart from God.

Such is the situation.

Inefficiency and mediocrity are the result.

The triumphant life is impossible without God.

Without doubt there are within each of us reservoirs of power that we have never tapped, of power that we have never dreamed. These we must learn to use; for the lame walk and the dumb speak when the flood gates of divine energy are opened. It means work in the building up of new centers of control; it means labor in the redirection of energies from old habits through new avenues of expression and use.

And it means the multiplication of our feeble powers by infinity when we call them by the name of God and make our minds and souls the stream-bed through which flows to our every need, for mastery in every struggle and for efficiency in every service to man, that all-conquering and inexhaustible power which is **God**.

God has not left us powerless, nor without assurance of victory. We have not been set adrift on the stormy sea of life without pilot and compass. With all the threatening weaknesses of the flesh and the seeming strength of opposing forces we can still be supreme. "If God be for us who can be against us?" God and one are a majority.

Now, having followed the general instructions regarding

Relaxation and
Concentration,
Contemplate—

Think of the power of God as sustaining all life, as being everywhere present, as entering in endless stream into your own willing being.

Picture Peter and John, who, through the power of God healed the lame man at the "Beautiful Gate" of the Temple. Picture these miracle workers who were but simple and easy going fishermen until they followed Christ, and so relating their lives to the inexhaustible source of all power, became world-benefactors.

Affirm

Impotency has gone from my life.

Commonplaceness and inefficiency are far from me.

The fulness of God's strength is flowing into my soul and body.

His destiny and purpose for me are being realized.

I radiate divine energy and men take knowledge of me that I have been with God.

O Spirit of the Everlasting, I yield myself to Thee. My soul is open and I receive Thee into myself so that what Thou art in love and truth and power I do more and more become. I know Thy presence in my life expelling sin and overcoming weakness so that as I walk with Thee I feel the uplift of Thy strength, the certain presence of Thy love, and the guidance of Thy truth. For these and all Thy gifts of peace and holiness I give my heart's full gratitude and consecrate myself to service for my Master's sake, Lord Jesus, Saviour of my life and Lord of all my thoughts and words and deeds. Amen.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

John XIV, 27.

PEACE

"Be still and know that I am God."

Psalm XLVI, 10.

(Read Psalms IV; XXIII: St. John XVI)

THE life in communion with God is a life of peace. For the child of God there is a quiet place in every storm and turmoil of life. In the midst of worldly minds and material things the true sons and daughters of God are humbly and serenely superior.

They possess their souls.

Yet the peace of God is not the quiet of seclusion but the sure confidence of the soul in the midst of the activities of life.

Perfect peace is that which clears the mind of every apprehension and distraction for clear thinking and effective living.

The soul at peace with God carries an atmosphere of composure and radiates a tranquility which subdues all clamor and puts fear to flight.

The peace of God is the rest in sleep; it is the calm in repose; it is the dispassionate in judgment; it is the imperturbable in the relationships of life; it is the victory in honorable defeat.

Observe the suggestions respecting *relaxation* and *concentration*, then

Contemplate

Remember Jesus as He stood in the ship on the stormy waters of Galilee rebuking the wind and commanding the Sea, "*Peace, Be Still.*" Listen to the wind as it dies away into the soft, soothing zephyr and picture the sea as the threatening waves subside and the broad, smooth, still water, quiet to its utmost depth, restores confidence to those who were fearful—needlessly.

Carve upon your mind that picture of Christ; cling to it with your soul. It is the promise of your own triumph over the troubled waves and the adverse winds of life. In Him find yourself revealed.

As you face the stormy seas of life and are buffeted by its tempests such is the power of your life in God, such the power of your "*Peace Be Still.*"

Affirm

My life is hid with Christ in God.

My mind is quiet within me and my soul is sure.

Henceforth every turmoil shall find me still, and every distracting thing shall find me self-possessed.

Into my daily tasks I bring God's peace
and as I move among my fellow men I shall
bless them with the quietness of my inner self.
Through Him that overcometh all I am free.
The bonds that made me servant to the noise
and ills of men are broken. Henceforth I am
the messenger of Peace.

Heavenly Father, I cannot speak Thy name
and be petty; I cannot call myself Thy child and
sow discord. For when I am faithful Thou
dost guide me in all my ways and keep me
clear in mind and spirit.

Thou hast promised to those that love Thee
and seek to do Thy will the peace which
passeth understanding. May I grow each day
to love Thee more and to do Thy will better.
So let Thy peace be mine as Thy love enlargeth
my soul and Thy mercy covereth my faults,
for Jesus' sake. Amen.

*“Now is come salvation and strength and the
kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ.”*

Revelation XII, 10

HEALTH

"Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

III, John 2.

(Read Psalm LXXXIV; St Luke VII)

THE agencies for the establishment and maintenance of health are: **physical, mental and spiritual.**

Physical

Our physical selves are real. It is futile to undertake escape from the problems of life by the declaration of a falsehood. We are freed from bondage to the material not by a denial of the existence of it but by the transformation and transfiguration of it. The function of the spiritual is the redemption of the material from slavery to sin and disease unto the glorification of God. This is the revelation of the Gospel. And it was the life work of Jesus who never treated the physical as a delusion or disease as unreal, but who healed diseases and, by precept and example, taught the consecration of the body to the service of God.

In the effort to heal the ills of men and to minister to their physical needs God uses human agents. It is part of the divine plan to elevate and immortalize men by setting them to the task of saving men. Where there is honest and intelligent effort to relieve suffering and to improve the physical conditions of life **there God is.** To say less is blasphemy!

Therefore in seeking health and endeavoring to cultivate a body more nearly fitted for God's occupancy, we must use such means as He has provided.

Hygienic laws must be obeyed.

Regular habits of life; wholesome food at proper intervals; plenty of water, fresh air and sunshine; appointed hours for rest religiously kept; a reasonable amount of exercise; clean surroundings and decent associates; this prescription will prevent most of the ills and heal half the diseases of humanity.

In addition to this when special need arises, consult an intelligent and honorable physician.

Mental

Within certain indefinable but most extended bounds the mind is master. Consciously or unconsciously it controls the life and makes for good or ill, health or sickness, life or death. Disease has killed its thousands but fear its tens of thousands. The mental attitude or belief may either create or accentuate infirmity; or it may either cure or mitigate it. Disease reigns supreme only when

the mind is held in bondage by the body. The function of the mind is to discern the truth and the right and to direct the physical self into the way of normal and wholesome expression. With the morally and physically ill the mind has degenerated to the place where it is simply a center for favorable reaction to the stimulus that carries the body along the line of least resistance. Yet the emotions, the reason and the will are designed to be the supreme and selective faculties by which what is not good for the body is denied and what is desirable for it is required. **So the chief function of the mind in physical and moral disease is to counter-suggest.**

To think a condition the opposite to that which it is the purpose to overcome. *To desire, to think, to will*, health and strength; to send messages of well-being throughout the body. For every thought of weakness to create two thoughts of power, for every sensation of pain to determine normality of organ activity and nerve function; thus to keep the mind superior to the body and to have the greater to master not serve the lesser.

Spiritual

To such extent as there has been failure to overcome disease and impotency it has been due in large measure to the failure to recognize the fact that man is mental and spiritual as well as physical. Treatment has been one-sided instead of three-fold. For this reason much time and energy has been wasted in

treating effects rather than causes. It is but natural that many ailments purely mental or spiritual in their origin should manifest themselves in nerve and organ derangements. The object is to treat the *cause*. Surely it is impossible to know real prosperity and true health save as the soul, the spiritual self, prospers!

We cannot think of God as infirm. Jesus, we know, despite the buffetings and scourgings both of soul and body that were the common experience of His life, had a reserve power with which He might have smitten His enemies. The real, the true, the inexhaustible force that makes for health is spiritual, that is, God. The more closely we conform to His laws; the more faithful our communion with Him; the more nearly normal, wholesome, and healthful we will be, in body, mind and spirit.

So must we learn to use all the healing forces of life. To leave any stone unturned, any force unused, that is sin. To use the means that God has provided without the recognition of God as the Provider, that is to ignore the vital, curative part. Separation from God is impotency for anything and everything.

Now, having observed the general directions for *relaxation* and *concentration*,

Contemplate

Health and strength. Think of God as the God of health and strength; as desiring for His children perfection of physical life-expression. Sense the well-being that flows from accord with the laws of God and from uninterrupted communion with His spirit.

Picture Jesus, the Great Physician, reaching to you with all compassion and healing power, touching your weakness back to strength and your infirmities to health. Feel His hand as it rests upon your head in benefaction and hear His voice as He says, "Be thou whole."

Affirm

I am whole. Health and strength are mine.

All the directing and commanding power of mind and the limitless resources of the spiritual are working unto the end of my well-being.

I open my life to their influence, I obey the law of righteousness, I attune my whole life to the being and purpose of God.

I am free from bondage to my body. Through the force of mind and spirit, used consciously as the manifest presence and power of God, I am transfiguring my physical self and presenting a renewed and obedient body for His service.

O Thou God Eternal, Creator and Sustainer of all good life, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, and without whose abiding presence there can be neither wholesomeness nor effectiveness of life, be Thou my strength and holiness and do Thou through Thine abiding presence sustain me.

Grant me grace not to fret under the burdens of life but rather to bear them with the ease of a sufficient faith. Keep me from being selfish about my ills so that I neither hinder recovery nor prevent Thy companionship on any stony path that may be my lot.

Make me conscious of Thine in-flowing love overcoming weakness and casting out fear and do Thou fill me with such soundness of body, mind and spirit as may fit me for Thy use and service. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

“If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.”

John XV, 7.

PRAYER

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching there unto with all perseverance.”

Ephesians VI, 18.

(Read Psalm CXLV; St. Matt. VI; St. John XVII)

PRAYER is communion between God and man. It is the language of the spirit life. It need not be spoken, but may simply be thought and felt, though the spoken thought lends itself to greater definiteness and helps to clarify the soul atmosphere.

Many there are who do not pray because they feel no need; others have ceased to pray because it seems fruitless. The former are suffering from soul atrophy, the latter from a misconception of the purpose of prayer.

The object of prayer is the establishment of right relationship with God; it is impossible that there be right relationship without it. The greatest privilege of life, and indeed, the end of it, is communion with God. Because it emphasizes our oneness with Him and because through it we learn of His will as well as partake more fully, and more consciously, of His nature, prayer is the most important means to this end.

If you will turn to the XXXII chapter of Genesis, 24th to 27th verses, you will find there illustrated the three laws of prayer.

First, is the *law of the struggle*.

The Genesis account tells us that Jacob struggled with the angel, the night through.

The greatest blessings of life are not to be had without effort. The blessing of blessings is not for the indifferent and the lethargic. And the chief reason for this is that without the effort and the struggle we would not know what the blessing is as to its value or as to its source. The struggle is required because it develops the capacity to receive and the power to retain. The pearl of great price has been scorned and trampled by many to whom its real significance and value have been meaningless. God does not give the blessing of communion with Him to everybody—because He cannot. There are pre-requirements that man must fulfill.

Jesus can knock at the door but He cannot open it. The lock is on the man-ward not the God-ward side.

Second, *the law of price*.

The account in Genesis again tells us that the angel touched Jacob in the thigh and thus crippled him for life. Though what is received is out of all proportion to what is given, some price must be paid. To give of time, of substance, of energy, in order to clear the way of approach to God, and to have the right to ask as well as the capacity to receive and the power to retain,—this is the law of the price.

And it is required in order that the source of the gift may not be forgotten. All his life through, as Jacob limped about the duties and undertook the responsibilities of it, as he enjoyed to the full all the abundant blessings of it, he must have that remembrance of the struggle with the angel, of the source of his blessing, and of the purpose for which it was given.

Third, *the law of the petition.*

As a reward for that night-long struggle Jacob asked no material thing; neither riches, nor power, nor fame. He said, "I will not let Thee go except Thou *bless* me." He sought the blessing of God upon his life. And that blessing changed Jacob's character. "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel."

The great keystone petition of all prayer is this, "Thy will be done." The intent of prayer is not to have God do our wills but to have us do His will. It is to work the transformation of our being, not to add to our comfort or our success in any material way. It is to empower us for service in His name, not to work some petty, selfish end that can but hinder the coming of His Kingdom.

So in all prayer we must remember the *law of the struggle*, the *law of the price*, and the *law of the petition*.

Now, after having observed the general suggestions regarding *relaxation* and *concentration*

Contemplate

Jesus in the "High Priestly" prayer (St. John XVII) in which He reiterates over and over the fact of His oneness with God and looks at and struggles to solve the problems of life from the Divine, not the human, viewpoint.

Picture Jesus in Gethsemane as He yields himself, entire, to the will and purpose of God for His life. And on the cross as He prefaces His opening and closing petitions with that one word, all unifying and all spirit-hunger satisfying—"Father."

Affirm

I commune with God.

I feel the oneness of my soul with Him.

I know new life. I am no longer Jacob, the human, but Israel, the divine. The old has passed away; behold, all things are new. I no longer burden God with selfish supplication, but am become His helper as I see things more His way and strive to do His will.

O God, Thou Wrestler with the souls of men,
I come full-spent and ask Thy blessing; the
blessing of the life of spirit-touch with Thee;
that as I delve into the chaos of this world and
bring the knowledge of Thy saving grace to
men, I may never be apart from Thee.

I thank Thee that my life is prayer; each
footstep made, my hands outstretched, each
fellowman-embracing thought of love, all, all
are prayer; and prayer is love of Thee and
Thine own love of me, communion's sweet
repose, together with the working of Thy will.
Amen, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

*“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;
and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do
justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with
thy God?”*

Micah VI, 8.

REPENTANCE

*"Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew
a right spirit within me."*

Psalm LI, 10.

(Read Psalm LI; Luke XV; I, St. John II)

THERE is one thing we cannot live without.

With it all else may be endured.

Poverty, sickness, war's carnage, disappointed expectations, blasted hopes; all, provided self respect is kept.

Self respect is indispensable to that equanimity which is the enemy of confusion.

Happy and invulnerable is the soul that is free from self accusation, that has confidence in the integrity of its own motives. Such a soul "borrows omnipotence from God" and finds itself undismayed by any tribulations or disappointments of life. It is not shaken by what it sees of evil, nor dismayed by its inability to satisfy its craving for a rational order in which righteousness and mercy prevail.

Self respect keeps the holy places of life invulnerable. It clothes its environment with wholesomeness and beauty. It radiates strength. It establishes confidence in the lives of the fallen. It is a tangible and infallible source of inspiration to every seeker of the truth.

It reveals God to man as to itself, for it knows that divine contentment which cannot be without God.

It is the habit of self-respect not to vaunt itself but to wrap itself about with the humility the sophisticated scorn. It is not an eloquent preacher, save in the potent touch it has with kindred souls and those looking for the rehabilitation of their wrecked lives.

And finally it has long since learned the fallacy of that dependence upon the outward things which so many of the benighted use to detract attention from their emptiness.

Self-respect is the consciousness of soul soundness.

What its incalculable value is may best be imagined through the consideration of the magnitude of the task of restoration, once self-respect is lost.

But what if one have lost one's self-respect?

If self-respect makes bearable anything in the way of adversity that life may have to offer, how tragic the plight of him who has no such citadel to which to flee in time of storm and stress!

The plight is common, though not commonly recognized.

This, because there are so many substitutes for self-respect.

Money, position, fine clothes, have postponed the day of reckoning.

The conventionalities of life have made a fine hiding place for many a sinner.

But we are speaking now of the honest soul that has learned to suffer the agony which comes when self-respect goes.

What has life to offer him?

We answer, nothing.

But Christ has!

There is a word in the Christian dictionary that means more than we are wont to think; that offers more than we have supposed.

It is **repentance**.

Not a glib confession of guilt. That confessions are so easily made by some manifests a conscience untrained in distinguishing the elemental matters bound up in all questions of right and wrong.

Not a seasonal rehearsal with others of those common sins out of the confession of which false comfort is drawn, because forsooth, what is so common can hardly be very wicked.

But, as the original Greek of the word means, a change of mind, a fronting of the whole life in a new direction. A new point of view. A determination to constructiveness.

Repentance is a revulsion against waste; it is a disgust with emptiness; it is a horror over the possibilities of evil; it is dismay born of the realization of guilt.

And it is a passionate yet deliberate turning of the back upon that respect-destroying life of yesterday and an eager, joyous, firm grasping, embracing, of the life that Christ offers.

When that hour comes we have begun to lay anew the foundation for self-respecting life; upon which foundation may be built still, do we but persevere, a life, true, approved of God and of service to man.

Follow the directions regarding *relaxation* and *concentration*.

Contemplate

The truths in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

Think of the swine and husks as typifying the life of disobedience, of waste, of separation from God.

Think of the hard upward road of return as indicative of the remorse and the determination to righteousness that are the evidence of true repentance.

Think of the father's welcoming arms, the feast of joy, as the guarantee of the perfect forgiveness of the sinner who sincerely seeks it.

Affirm

I abhor the things that pull me down and make me unworthy of God's love and man's friendship.

I am filled with disgust at the thought of a life wasted in disobedience to the commands of God.

I long for the recreation of my self-respect that I may know the peace that passeth understanding.

And now I know that God is receiving me unto Himself for He has promised that he who confesses shall be forgiven.

I feel myself loosed from the destructive thoughts and deeds of yesterday.

The discord of my former ways has passed and I am surrounded by the divine harmony.

I have come at last to myself.

I have come to God.

I am forgiven; I am cleansed; I hold up my head once more as the true child of God.

Jesus, blessed Saviour, Thou hast borne the pain and burden of all our sins and yet is Thy mercy and compassion undiminished. Without weariness Thou dost strive to turn us about and to show us the right. Thou knowest not the meaning of faltering purpose or questioning love and without stint Thou givest to sinners the comfort of Thy mercy and the new strength of Thy righteousness.

O Lamb of God, Thou hast taught me to know sin as the thing that maketh men forget Thee and Thou hast shown me that good is the desire to do Thy will and to come unto the knowledge of Thy love.

In Thy mercy Thou hast lifted me out of the treacherous places and stood me upon the firm ground. Thou hast brought me out of the valley of the shadow to the vision of the promised land.

Thou callest unto me and I come. I reach out my hand for Thine and I find Thee waiting. I look up into Thy countenance and meet Thy ready glance, Lord Jesus, Saviour, Master, Word Incarnate, Friend. Amen.

“They continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and in fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers.”

Acts II, 42.

COMMUNION

“He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him.” John VI, 56.

(Read John VI; Hebrews X)

THERE are four reasons why faithful attendance upon the Holy Communion is essential to the expression of the highest Christian life.

First, it is the *command of Jesus* that we observe the Sacrament.

“This do,” He said, “in remembrance of me.” That He meant the *regular* celebration of the Communion is apparent from the understanding and practice of the Apostles and the early Church. The observance of this Sacrament became the central feature of every gathering of the disciples of Christ.

It is the one thing that Jesus has asked us to do with respect to His person itself. And it is the command of Him who is our authority in the things of the spirit life. Therefore, it is not for us to question, or to condition His command by any petty, personal opinion. Jesus stands in character and spiritual discernment so far above the most genius-like of mortals that every instinct and longing of the soul must find in Him its object and satisfaction, its authority and ultimate court of appeal. To do what Jesus said to do, to obey Him; this is the foundation of the Christian life. The beauty and sweet reasonableness of magnificent spiritual structure most certainly follow.

Second, it is commanded as a *memorial*.

We are so constituted that we must make use of every possible provision to keep the spiritual life foremost. It must be emphasized by us; for it will not press itself upon us and have the dominating place that it should have unless we use every facility within our reach to relate ourselves to the means of grace.

We are aided in remembering friends and loved ones by photographs and objects of one sort and another with which we are surrounded. Why not use like methods to keep His memory alive in our hearts? For, when we attend the Holy Communion, our minds are taken back to the time of the institution of the Sacrament, to the day and occasion of His sacrifice for us. Again our memories are refreshed and we live over and over that period of His life fraught with such significance to ourselves. We follow Him step by step on the Calvary way and kneel before the Cross in contemplation of His infinite love and mercy.

Third, it is the evidence of *our unity in the Faith*.

We need to gather at the altar lest we forget our unity with our fellowmen as well as our oneness with God. It is the place where all superficial differences vanish and the sons and daughters of God become unified in one great corporate act, in the worship of our common Lord and Saviour.

We need to gather at the altar rail to manifest our unity to the world. It is the highest expression of Christian faith and life

and the one manifestation of belief and consistency for which the world has nothing but respect and before which it must stand in soul-aroused question and wonder.

Fourth, it is the appointed means of *communion with the living Christ*.

We worship not a dead hero but a living Lord and Saviour!

The need of Christian mysticism is universal; the day for it has come. Not only do we believe that many fortunate ones have seen and touched our Lord in the spirit, but we know that this gift is for all men who will try in truth and sincerity to learn of Him. Because communion with God is the greatest blessing and true end of all life and because the communion of the body and blood of our Lord is the most important of the means appointed for that end, it is nothing less than sin to treat it with indifference and neglect.

We observe the Sacrament of the Lord's supper because Jesus commands us; because it keeps His precious death and sacrifice for us alive in our hearts and minds; because it realizes for ourselves and manifests to others our unity in the faith; and because so we commune with the spirit of the living Christ.

Now, having observed the directions respecting *relaxation* and *concentration*,

Contemplate

The scene of the institution of the Sacrament. Think of the bread and wine as the spiritual body and blood of Christ. Know that as you partake of the elements in the Holy Communion you are in very truth partaking of Christ. Feel the inflowing of Christ's being, the fusing of your soul with Him and thus the obliteration of everything unworthy in your own life.

Affirm

I obey the command of Jesus.

I keep alive within my mind and heart the memory of His passion and death. I think upon his wounds and sorrows borne for my sake.

To the world I manifest the unity of my life with Him and His faithful people.

I long to commune with Him.

I look forward to the blessed privilege of the Sacrament He ordained as the surest means of preserving my oneness with His spirit.

Dear Lord Jesus, Saviour and Master, teach me perfect obedience to Thy will and way and unreserved submission to Thy every commandment; for well my heart knoweth that Thou hast ordained Thy laws for my soul's good. May Thy life of sorrow and suffering not have been in vain for me and may the memory of Thy passion and death never forsake me.

And as I obey Thy commands and seek to live Thy way, give me the blessing of Thy constant presence in my daily life that my soul may ever be conscious of its unity with Thee and that my every thought and word and deed may show forth to men Thy saving grace and the wisdom of Thy better way. Amen.

“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

St. Matthew XI, 29

THE INNER LIFE

“Man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart.” I Samuel XVI, 7.

(Read Psalm I; St. Luke XI; Ephesians IV; James III)

TO BE rather than to seem, to labour for internal perfection rather than external effect, to have what I am eloquent rather than what I pretend to be clamor meaninglessly, to have no unworthy self giving the lie to any goodly appearance, to be on such fair terms with myself as will, in the quiet and secluded times of life, make my own company welcome to me, to be such friends with downrightness and straightforwardness that I can disarm hypocrisy and put double-mindedness to flight; this must be my determination would I live usefully and die honorably.

The tendency of the demands of life is to make one live entirely on the outside of oneself, to persuade one to neglect that true culture which is deeper far than a first class education or the acquisition of a manner that can carry off a situation with a measure of credit.

The great emergencies are the real test of one's character, the crises of life search out the soul. Woe to the man who for the hour of trial has not laid by a store of the strength that comes from self-discovery and a knowledge of inner soundness.

Let us understand that the inner self is the real self. It is a realm that offers unmeasured possibilities of exploration and discovery.

Eventually we will find that this inner self is a microcosm, containing an expression of infinite life and reflecting the destiny of supreme intention.

For the sounding of the depths of this subconscious life and for the release of its hidden secrets and powers there are two clear and unfailing laws.

First, there is the law of simplicity.

Simplicity is the great alchemy that creates the gold of unity from the base metals of diversity.

God is the great **One**. To be complex is to be at enmity with Him. One may not without disaster live a divided life seeking God with one part and disobeying His laws with the other.

Simplicity is the true greatness which casts aside all dissimulation and overcomes the anarchy of arrogance and conceit. Also it begets humility, that lantern to the feet of those who seek God.

Another of the children of simplicity is orderliness. It is not to be expected that a disorderly life can know the truth. There is something well defined about the ways of a godly soul, an unassuming certainty which indicates that it travels in no strange land.

Simplicity brings unity, casting out all those evil spirits of distraction that would storm the citadel of self-possession.

Second, there is the law of purity.

One sees God through the heart not through the mind.

Character is more necessary to the discernment of truth than is intelligence.

It is sin, not ignorance, that keeps us in the dark.

He who thinks to know the God of Holiness without himself striving most diligently to be free from reproach before God and man is most grossly deceived.

Unqualifiedly the greatest contributor to spiritual insight and the brightest light of revelation in the search for God is a clean heart.

Now, having observed the rules regarding *relaxation* and *concentration*,

Contemplate

The part of the life of Jesus which was consistently devoted to the solitude that made self-understanding possible.

The frequency with which He withdrew from the world the better to know Himself and learn the Father's will.

Picture Christ alone in the wilderness as He searched the profound depths of His being; and in Gethsemane during the hour of supreme decision as He brought His will into utter subjection to the purpose of God.

Know Christ as He stood before Pilate unperturbed because He was sure of Himself.

Think of Him as He stood before the world rejected, yet of all the world that one alone who had entered into the heritage of the everlasting Kingdom.

Hear Him as He says "I am come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly."

Affirm

I am.

I am one, not many.

My life once at war with itself now finds peace in unity.

I know the harmony of a single purpose.

I discover within myself depths that ring true.

Out of turmoil of meager life I have come into the land of plenty.

I am no longer afraid, because I am of clean conscience and have passed through the mists of compromise and deception to the clear light of truth and fidelity.

Dear Lord Jesus, upon Thy countenance is the light of eternity and within Thine eyes gleameth the everlasting fire. Thou lookest into life and Thou seest beyond it. Thou art perplexed by no cross purposes and art turned aside by no clamoring. Thou knowest what it is to be and hast found peace.

O how firm Thou art and yet how kind: How Thou dost put the fevered ages to shame with Thine even steps: How patiently Thou waitest for the time of my disillusionment that I may turn to Thee and find the spirit!

How Thou rebukest me with Thy clear brow and how Thou searchest me out with Thine unwavering eye! If I have been a stranger to Thee it is because Thou treadest only the path that is straight. Fain would I have kept friends with Thee while I made much of those who smile foolishly upon Thy gentleness, until I was at last set right by Thy mercy.

Now Thou hast revealed me unto myself for Thou has been my mirror. And in the revelation Thou hast been graciously pleased not only to show that part which is ugly in its difference from Thee but as well that part which may be beautiful in its likeness to Thee.

Then, as Thou labourest may I lend a hand without awkwardness and as Thou goest forward may I company with Thee without cavil; for Thy name and love's sake. Amen.

“Go ye into all the world.”

St. Mark XVI, 15.

INFLUENCE

"They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

Acts IV, 13.

(Read Acts III; St. John XV)

THE distinctive characteristic of Christianity is this, that it requires a relationship with man as well as with God. The vision of the redeemed world given us by Christ waits for its realization upon the perfection of this relationship.

Not only am I a child of God, but *we* are children of God.

In the divine family God's concern is for *all* the children. He alone has the mark of the Father's love who manifests the brother's or the sister's heart.

But, independent of what we will there is a certain reaching out of what we are. The relationships exist whether we will or no.

They exist for good or ill.

All self-deception to the contrary there is no isolation of the real self from life. Do we place a guard upon our lips and withdraw ourselves from contact with men there is nevertheless a something embracing him and drawing him to our own truth or falsehood.

This is none the less a fact because the ways of it are past finding out.

Influence as we mean it is the power and love of God put to constructive use in every activity of body, mind and spirit. *Influence* is this power and love made effective through relationships.

Life usefulness is limited by the ability to comprehend life-purpose and direction, by the capacity for love of one's fellowman, and by the measure of consistency in manifesting Christ to the world through character.

Also it waits upon the use of that greater self with which God has endowed us and which we have been at such slight pains to discover and develop.

For manifestly, as the children of God, we are potentially great and fine, and need only the acknowledgment of our heritage to make our life expansive and upbuilding, contributing to the world the pure gold of honor and right thinking in the place of the dross of its lust and deceit.

We have learned of avenues of service of which the past has revealed us little. The power of the rightly directed mind over the infirmities of the body; the power of mind and spirit over mind and spirit; the power of the soul to reach beyond the limitations of the flesh, space and time and to affect for good or ill whatever it seeks to touch and penetrate.

The vision of our day is the vision of the Universal. We are coming to think and speak in terms of the everywhere. Our conception of life has become more beautiful and dignified with the consciousness that there is nothing in time and space or transcending them by which we are not touched and conditioned, and that there is nothing we have not the power to touch and condition if we will.

Dissociation from the Universal is death.

Perfect relationship to it is life eternal.

Now, after having followed the directions given under *relaxation* and *concentration*,

Contemplate

Think of Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple.

Picture the Master of men as with that spirit making for wholeness He healed at a distance the servant of the centurion.

Hear him as he says "Go ye into all the world."

Affirm

I am more than human; I am divine.

I am more than flesh; I am mind and spirit.

I am the master not the slave of body, time and place.

With my soul I seek to touch and understand the whole of which I am a part.

I reach out to those I love and those I ought to love wherever they may be. I strive to help and sustain them with my wholesome thinking and my vital loving.

And so do I live within myself and in conscious touch with Christ, my Master, that those with whom I walk and labour in life take knowledge of me that I have been with Him.

O Thou infinite and all comprehending Spirit of life and light, I seek Thy illumination for the dark places of my soul that there may be revealed unto me what I know not of myself and destiny.

Teach me, O God, to be fearful of waste and error; for I would fulfill Thy purpose for my life and come unashamed to the end of my days.

May that with which Thou hast endowed me be used to the full; may what I am in Thee be so expressed as to serve the largest number and do the greatest good; and may I constantly grow in such unselfish ways as may bring the consciousness of my oneness with humanity and with Thee.

All which I pray for Jesus' sake. Amen.

“Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life.”

I Timothy VI, 12.

FAITH

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Hebrews XI, 1.

(Read Hebrews XI; I Timothy IV)

FAITH is no child's plaything, nor coward's refuge.

It is for the soldier of life not the non-combatant.

It is a conviction to possess one, not an opinion to be held.

It is at once the object of ridicule and the mover of mountains.

Paradoxically it gives substance to the intangible and makes the impossible come true. Unto the mortal who says 'I cannot,' faith comes and the task is done.

Faith has scaled insuperable mountains and sounded the depths of unfathomable seas. It has fought and won hopeless causes, redeemed lost souls and in a world dominated by materialism laid hold on the Infinite.

Faith sees through the dark clouds to the sun, spans the gulf between flesh and spirit and overthrows the barriers between time and eternity.

Faith is the will to believe despite many apparently good reasons for not believing; it is a determination to loyalty though all the world turn infidel.

It is this very will to believe that finally brings one to the point of vantage which justifies faith; for assuredly there is little in any sphere of life that can be grasped and understood without the sympathy of a willing approach.

But faith is more than an acceptance of the undemonstrated.

Faith is a faculty.

It is a power of discernment.

It is the eye of the soul.

We have not been endowed with a yearning for the Infinite and left without ability in due measure to gratify that yearning. Indeed it is our foretaste of the Infinite that has created the desire for it.

This faculty must be cultivated; it must be developed by exercise. The very effort to penetrate the veil will eventually make it possible to do so.

Trust then your spiritual sight and be not dismayed by earth-born clouds; for faith is the substance of things hoped for.

Now having observed the general directions for *relaxation* and *concentration*,

Contemplate

The whole of life as borne upon the shoulders of faith.

Realize that the great tasks and deeds of life have been performed by the men and women of greatest faith in the unseen.

Remember the patriarchs of Israel and their abiding faith in the promises of God.

Think of Paul who on the way to Damascus saw Christ, of John who on Patmos beheld him in glory, and of Stephen who in the hour of his martyrdom was blessed with the heavenly vision.

Picture that which you would believe and be and reach constantly toward it.

Affirm

I know that God has made me in His image and after His likeness and that He has given me power to see beneath the surface to the heart and the spirit.

In seeking Him I trust those instincts He has created in me.

I refuse to be bound to earth and I will not be deceived into contentment by a satisfaction of the flesh.

In my search for God I will not be turned into the bypaths that lead to altars self-seeking men have built.

Though all the world deny yet will I affirm.

That faith is mine which overcomes the world for it perceives the universe of reality which is the source of all good life.

O God, that there are things I cannot understand is but the evidence of their infinity and that there are times of doubt reveals but mine own fault.

I would not assume that what I am unable to grasp cannot be nor yet that the whole of which I am a part is beyond my reach. Rather do I know that Thou hast not given me the longing to understand simply to torment it with impossibility but rather to satisfy it with increasing knowledge when it seeks worthily.

May not be mine the part of the coward who fears the truth nor of the laggard unwilling to pay the price of it in labour and sincerity.

If my steps on the path are slow may they be none the less sure, and while I strive on toward the goal where faith will be seeing and belief will be knowing, may I receive strength and inspiration from those on whose vigils has long since broken the eternal day of their faith's justification. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”

II Peter I, 19.

HOPE

*"Blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord
and whose hope the Lord is."* *Jeremiah XVII, 7.*

(Read Psalms XXVII; LXII; I Peter I; Phillipians III)

WITHOUT hope life would be unbearable. It is the looking forward to a better day that lightens the burdens of this.

Each succeeding dawn brings its promise—even though the evening see no fulfillment. It is in the promise not in the fulfillment that we live; for we are not prone to linger over attainments. We turn from them to seek the realization of other longings. So are we constituted that we find little satisfaction in what we can hold. In climbing the mountains of life we get little comfort out of what is below us so long as there are ranges and peaks above.

That discontent which we often count our sorest affliction is our greatest blessing. We are not created for happiness but for strife. Satisfaction is death. Life is longing and growth and pain—and then more longing.

Longing, hope, faith, how closely these are related.

Longing is hope militant.

Faith is the backbone of visions.

If life is the sea and the soul a ship, then longing is the propeller, faith is the helm and hope is the star.

Hope borrows always from the Golden Age, which is tomorrow not yesterday, and paints all life's dark clouds with rainbows of expectation. Castles are its dreams and men and women great and good its friends.

Hope thrives on disappointment.

Where flesh is weak hope is strong, and grim death finds it invulnerable.

This thing, hope, came out of no earth-born cell, no animal yesterdays, but out of the tomorrow toward which it ever turns and which is eternity.

Hope may falter.

It never fails!

Observe the suggestion regarding *relaxation* and *concentration*

Contemplate

The wilderness life of the Children of Israel. Their longing, their hope for the Promised Land.

Think of those early Christians who in the midst of persecution with earnest expectation awaited the coming of Christ.

Remember what numberless souls under conditions devoid of all semblance of promise, have striven on with faces directed toward a morrow that no persecutor could see.

Contemplate the light within the eyes of those who died with their goal ungained, a light that gave the lie to every earthly hindrance and spoke of the final end truly seen and the way made clear.

Affirm

Hope and I are fast friends.

There is nothing beyond the reach of God.

Those problems that time cannot, eternity will solve.

In God's good time the rough will be made smooth and the crooked straight.

Over the hill is paradise.

I will not falter.

I do not fear for the outcome.

At the foundation and at the center there is goodness and truth and beauty.

Patiently and confidently I await their day.

O God, Thou hast blessed me with the unquenchable thirst. Thou hast made me to reach out and to look up. Thou permittest me to sense infinity and to taste the sweetness of the ineffable.

This hope that springeth eternally, surely it is of Thee; and that for which the craving consumeth me and which my earth-dimmed sight seeth distantly, surely this will someday reward my search with greater nearness.

This expectation of triumphant good is not for naught else would I not abhor wickedness; this confidence in the better day is not a mockery else would I have no concern for the redemption of the present moment; and this hope for the millenium of Thine accepted love is no delusion else would mine own neglect bring no remorse.

O do Thou strengthen me in unwavering hope and stablish me in abiding trust. Let no trial find me faithless and no hard place without the spirit to lift mine eyes. Above all save me from any hour that might possibly look on the black moment of a repudiated faith, and do Thou bring me at last to a sufficient measure of Thine own understanding love. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

I St. John IV, 8.

LOVE

"Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

I Corinthians XIII, 3.

(Read Romans XII; I Corinthians XIII; I St. John III; IV)

PITY the loveless!

No one else needs it.

Whatever else one has, if he has not love, he is pitiable; but if he has nothing else and has love, he is enviable.

Life's greatest masquerade is that of the unloving and the unloved; for the lack of no other possession does one strive so hard to conceal.

Multitudes there are who seek satisfaction in something less than love—calling it greater—like popularity, or wealth, or art, or good works, or petty affairs of the heart, or lust; and their path through life is strewn with tell-tale, broken baubles while their hearts are gnawed by consciousness of the great failure.

Love lingers but a brief space with small souls and quickly departs where there is no virtue. It withstands misery without complaint, but will not long company with vanity, envy and deceit, though they offer the luxury of palaces.

Love is life.

Without love people do not live; they shrivel up and eke out an existence of self-pity.

Conceivably one may live without faith and without hope, but not without love; yet love generates both faith and hope.

Love is fire—and all true life is conflagration.

Love is ether—embracing space, bearing light on wings of incredible swiftness and in utter quiet.

Love is radium—diffusing energy, penetrating darkness.

God is love.

We do not say “love is God,” but “God is Love.”

Herein lies the difference between simpering emotion and empowering passion.

Where love is God it brings the curse of idolatry, being made in the image of the devotee. Its liberty is license, for there is no recognition of the law of self-restraint; its privileges are ways of degeneration, for it evades the exacting conditions of all worthiness.

Where God is Love, it has been discovered that love is more than charity and mercy and throbbing heart, that, indeed it is as well justice and righteousness and sternness; that it is a chastening rod as well as enfolding arms; that it is three parts of renunciation to one of possession.

Love abides.

Unnumbered centuries have been powerless to destroy it.

Love is greatest.

Without it faith is a skeleton and hope a mirage.

Love is eternity come to dwell in time.

Observe the rules regarding *relaxation* and *concentration*,

Contemplate

God's love as manifested in Jesus Christ, who is the throbbing heart of the divine passion for the souls of men.

Think of love as consuming flame, burning away the dross of selfishness and the base metals of impurity.

Think of love as infinite patience, justifying itself not by the conditions it may be able to impose but rather by those it is willing to bear.

Think of love as renunciation, for it grows strong by what it surrenders not by what it acquires.

Think of love as Jesus, arms out-stretched, upon the Cross.

Remember that it was the unquenchable fire of His love that brought Him to Calvary; remember that there is no love worthy of the name that does not partake of the qualities revealed in His love for us.

Affirm

God is love.

Of Him I am the creature.

Bitterness and envy, pettiness and strife, enemies of love, are becoming more strange to me each day.

My soul is enlarged by the thought of the infinite passion.

I grow steadily more capable of true love and more worthy to be truly loved.

I satisfy this hunger to love and be loved by no pampering of character destroying appetites, but I give it light to live in and the clear air to breathe and I follow it utterly hope beyond hope.

O Thou Infinite Lover, who art above all and through all and in all, O Thou who art romance and consuming passion, infinite patience and renunciation, how dearly Thou hast loved us, with what insistence hast Thou sought us, with what prices hast Thou bought us.

Even so, Thou hast left us free to love whom and what we will for Thou wouldest not have us love Thee by constraint. Yet no man loveth till he loveth Thee and the first dawning of love's meaning is not within his heart until he would love in Thy name.

O Thou Timeless Lover, whom the infidelity of the ages cannot change and who art deceived by no false heart, do Thou kindle within me the fire of the love that never faileth. May it burn so strongly that the winds of adversity will but fan it to a higher flame and may it shine so brightly that the fires of unworthy affection will cease to allure.

Save as I love Thee, all is chaos and discord; save as Thou art the desire of my soul do I dwell in the outer-darkness.

Thou who knowest what love is teach me to know it too; Thou who lovest with understanding and without shadow of turning, O make me Thine, indeed. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

“Because I live, ye shall live also.”

St. John XIV, 19.

ETERNAL LIFE

"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

St. John XVII, 3.

(Read Luke XXIV; I Corinthians XV)

IMMORTALITY alone makes life intelligible and livable. Life everlasting is the answering reality to the need and longing of every normal human being. Though the truth must ever fall short of intellectual demonstration, the fact that we can and do think in terms of the eternal and that it is the object of our desire is enough evidence for our requirements.

And what the character of that eternal life is we do not know; chiefly for the reason that anything which would be satisfying to us in our present state would prove inadequate in the state of purely psychic activities and relationships. Sufficient is it to know that life eternal will bring us unto a perfect knowledge of the "only true God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent."

To know God is life eternal.

That is not only the purpose of life eternal, it is life eternal. So as we seek to know God, and grow daily in communion with Him we bring eternity into time. For those who are in touch with the Infinite the question of

immortality never arises. The eternal nature of the human soul is assumed as natural and inevitable; for to question our immortality is to question God's being and to thwart the very end of our communion with Him. It is unthinkable that the blessed privilege of relationship with Him is offered us with nothing but obliteration as the aim and end.

We make eternal truths real for ourselves by association with them and by affirmative attitude toward them.

God's blessing, Christ's saviourship, the Holy Spirit's power, Eternal life, are true or not, for us individually, just as we make them. An attitude of indifference or negation will bar us from all knowledge of God,—and to know God is life eternal.

So we practice the presence of God, we practice eternal life, we make it real to us, we bring it into the present, we cultivate the spiritual, we enlarge our souls. Then, when comes the time for the change of our life expression, the transition will be easy and natural, free from abruptness and shock, without fear and with all peace and joy.

Now, after having followed the directions given under *relaxation* and *concentration*,

Contemplate

The empty tomb of Jesus, on the Resurrection morning. Think of the tomb as the gate to life eternal not as a sealed enclosure embracing us in perpetual gloom.

Then go in thought and spirit to the Ascension Mount. Gather with the chosen for Jesus' parting words and let your inward sight behold Him as He is recieved up into Heaven. Know that the resurrection and ascension of Christ are not a mockery or our own limitations, but an *earnest of the promise that where He is, there we shall be also.*

Affirm

I am immortal.

Death has no more dominion over me.

I contemplate the end of my earthly life with serenity. With peace and joy do I look forward to the hour when the love of God shall embrace and keep me in its never failing, all sufficient strength and I shall enter the fuller life of greater thought and love and service.

O Thou God of our immortal souls, suffer us not through sin and neglect to live apart from Thee. Enlighten us with the knowledge of Thy being, strengthen us with Thy presence, enlarge and refine our spirits with the thought of our eternal life, that we may here and now prepare ourselves for greater love and service in the greater life to be.

So that at last when the time of our going cometh, we may be no strangers to the thought and may give ourselves, our souls and bodies, into Thy tender, unwasteful care and keeping for such use and service as Thy wisdom may find best. All which we ask for His sake Who died for us, Who rose again for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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